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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 09/215,951 | 12/18/1998 | JOSEPH P. FELL | 659/489 | 1434 |
| 757 | 7590 | 03/23/2005 | EXAMINER | |
| BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE | | | CHEVALIER, ALICIA ANN | |
| P.O. BOX 10395 | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| CHICAGO, IL 60610 | | | 1772 | |

DATE MAILED: 03/23/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

| Office Action Summary | Application No. | Applicant(s) |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | 09/215,951 | FELL ET AL. |
| Examiner | Art Unit | |
| Alicia Chevalier | 1772 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).

Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on BPAI decision December 30, 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 48-50 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 48-50 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date
4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ .
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: ____ .

DETAILED ACTION

1. In view of the decision by the Board of Patent Appeals and Interference (BPAI) rendered on December 30, 2004, a new grounds of rejection is set forth below on claims 48-50 only, see page 12 section D of the decision. Matters concerning claims 1-12 and 14-18 are here by closed in view of the BPAI's decision. MPEP 1214.06, section III.

REJECTIONS

2. **The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.**

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. Claims 48-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith (U.S. Patent No. 5,209,801) in view of Vander Wielen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,720,415).

Smith discloses a disposable elastic structure for use as sweat bands, bandages, athletic supporters, support straps for incontinence devices and the like (*col. 1, lines 26-29*).

Regarding Applicant's claim 48, Smith disclose discloses a stretchable composite material comprising a first layer of breathable material (*nonwoven layer, col. 5, line 32 and figure 6*), a second layer of breathable material (*nonwoven layer, col. 5, line 32 and figure 6*), at least two elastic members (*elastic strands, col. 5, line 34*) positioned in between the first and second layers (*figure 6*). The composite further comprises regions of securement comprising attached zones (*adhesive layer, col. 5, line 31*) securing the elastic members, the first layer and

second layer (*figure 6*). The attached zones extending traverse and across a majority of the elastic members (*figure 6*).

Smith fails to disclose that the stretchable material has a maximum elongation of at least about 85% of the elongation of the elastic members.

Vander Wielen discloses a composite elastic material for use in protective covers and wraps, outerwear, undergarments, menstrual and incontinence control articles and garments such as disposable diapers (*col. 21, lines 52-57*). The composite elastomeric material comprises an elastic web held in tension sandwiched between two gatherable webs and bonded together (*figure 2a*). Gather form in the unbonded sections of the gatherable webs after the tension is released in the elastic web (*col. 13, line 15 to column 14, line 68*).

Vander Wielen further discloses that the stretchable composite material elongation is dependent on the amount the elastic web is stretched, i.e. if it is desired to prepare a composite material stretchable to 100 percent elongation, a 100 cm length of elastic web may be stretched to a length of, for example 220 cm (120 percent elongation) and bonded at spaced-apart locations to a 220 cm length of non-elastic material (*col. 9, lines 24-60*).

Smith and Vander Wielen are analogous because they both disclose stretchable composites for use in incontinence articles.

The exact maximum elongation of the composite is deemed to be a cause effective variable with regard elongation of the elastic member when bonded to the nonelastic webs. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to have determined the optimum value of a cause effective variable such as maximum elongation of the composite, as similarly taught by Vander Wielen, through routine experimentation in the absence of a showing of

Art Unit: 1772

criticality in the claimed maximum elongation. *In re Boesch*, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980), *In re Woodruff*, 16 USPQ2d 1934, 1936 (Fed. Cir. 1990). It is desirable to have a high maximum elongation, such as 85% or higher, because the more the structure can elongate the longer the structure becomes in length and is capable of surrounding bigger items. This enables the elastic structure to fit a wider variety of shapes and sizes.

Regarding Applicant's claim 49, Smith discloses that the composite material further comprises a stiffened edge, since the reference discloses that the edges contain side straps (*col. 6, line 13*). The side straps are deemed to make the edges stiffer than the middle section since they have an extra layer added to the edges only.

Regarding Applicant's claim 50, Smith discloses an article of apparel comprising the composite material (*incontinence articles, col. 1, lines 26-29*).

Conclusion

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alicia Chevalier whose telephone number is (571) 272-1490. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon, can be reached on (571) 272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Alicia Chevalier
3/21/05


HAROLD PYON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
1772

3/21/05